

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, EAGR, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE: FOOD SITUATION
IN INDIA

THE FOLLOWING IS A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED JULY 30 BY THE
INDIAN EMBASSY INFORMATION SERVICE:

QUOTE: FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA: OUR ATTENTION HAS
BEEN DRAWN TO SOME PRESS REPORTS PAINTING A VERY
EXAGGERATED PICTURE OF THE FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA.

THE FOLLOWING FACTS MAY SERVE TO PUT THE SITUATION IN
PERSPECTIVE:

EVEN THOUGH INDIA FACED A DROUGHT DURING THE AGRICULTURAL
YEAR 1971-72 FOLLOWED BY AN EVEN MORE SEVERE AND WIDE-
SPREAD DROUGHT IN 1972-73 (WHICH WAS A DROUGHT YEAR
AFFECTING USSR, AUSTRALIA AND MOST OF ASIA AND AFRICA),
THE COUNTRY'S FOOD SUPPLIES WERE MANAGED WITHOUT ANY
EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE AND WITHOUT ANY CASE OF STARVATION
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DEATHS, WITH ONLY MARGINAL IMPORT OF LESS THAN TWO

MILLION TONS OF FOOD GRAINS IN 1972-73. IN SPITE OF THE SERIOUS DROUGHT DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN NO BREAKDOWN OF THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OR STARVATION DEATHS, AS A RESULT OF CONSTRUCTIVE RELIEF WORKS AND INCREASED INPUTS FOR IRRIGATION FACILITIES ARRANGED BY

GOVERNMENT. SEVERAL INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS WHO HAVE SEEN THE WORKING OF THE RELIEF MEASURES ORGANISED HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH THEY WERE CONDUCTED ASSURING THE DROUGHT-AFFECTED POPULATION OF ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FOOD GRAINS.

AS A RESULT OF THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY BY A LARGE NUMBER OF FARMERS OVER THE LAST SEVEN YEARS, THE WHEAT PRODUCTION HAS BEEN MORE THAN DOUBLED AND RICE PRODUCTION IS ALSO INCREASING. THIS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN A PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM THROUGH THE LAST TWO YEARS OF DROUGHT.

THE GOVERNMENT ARE IMPORTING GRAIN IN ORDER TO REPLENISH THE STOCKS AND ENSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF AN ADEQUATE SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD GRAINS. THESE PURCHASES ARE MADE ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS FROM COUNTRIES WHERE GRAIN IS AVAILABLE AT REASONABLE PRICES WITH APPROPRIATE DELIVERY SCHEDULES. INDIA IS GETTING THE FULLEST COOPERATION FROM THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING U.S.A. ROGERS

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